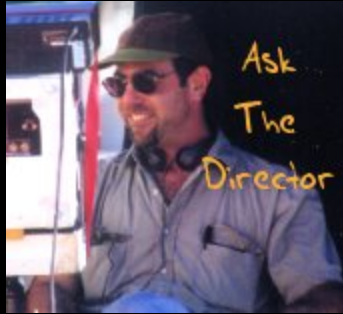


Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
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Name: noteem portant
E-mail: don't have one

Dear Sir becker,

An acomplished director such as yourself has an indisputable right to criticise the work of fellow directors, you are quoted as saying that heroin and cocain have apparently diffrent concistencies and it would be idiotic to assume a confusion of one for the other could be made(this is of course in reference to your stance on the credibility of the film Pulp Fiction). Therefore, I would like to point out the glaringly obvious,The title is not Pulp Factual, is it!? When Tarantino found out the proper method of dealing with o.d's (salt water in the veins if memory serves)he thought it very unexciting and opted for the adrenalin shot. One last not, My dear Mr Becker, do I detect a note of bitter envy?
P.S If you know your low budget film speak, you should know where that last line was from. Did I borrow it, or steal it?

Dear Noteem:

I'm afraid I don't know where the line is from, nor am I envious of Quentin Tarantino. He has certainly made a lot more money than me, but since I don't enjoy or respect his films, I would rather have made my films.

Josh

Name: Rob Lindsey
E-mail: deadites_cabin@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

Yes, I was wondering if you knew of anywhere on the internet that I might be able to view or even buy any of the old Super 8 movies that Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert, Bruce Campbell, and Scott Spegal did way back when? For Example, "It's Murder", "Within The Woods", and so on. Any help will be appreciated, Thanks!

Dear Rob:

All of mine, Bruce's and Sam's Super-8 films are not available for sale, unless you get them bootleg at a convention, which is where most people get them. Oddly, the tape most people have is called "The Short Films of Sam Raimi" and contains several films that I co-wrote and directed that Sam appears in, like "The Blind Waiter," and "Cleveland Smith Bounty Hunter."

Josh

Name: Marguerite Le Pellée
E-mail: mlepellee@tafisa.ca

Dear Josh:

I tried to find an address where I can write to get all Mr. Anthony Quinn video.

May be you can help me. I am french but i love this actor and I would like to buy all his video.

Thank you in advance for your help and may be you can give me an address too where I can write him.

Marguerite Le Pellée

Dear Marguerite:

I don't think it's humanly possible to get all of Quinn's films on video. I find [Movies Unlimited](#) have a pretty good selection and you can also check through the [Internet Movie Data Base](#). As to writing to my buddy Tony himself, I have no idea.

Josh

Name: Charles
E-mail: cscorder@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Your [review of "Gladiator"](#) was on the mark, as usual. I, too, was bothered by the gaping gaps in logic of this so-called spectacle. Even worse, none of those who slobbered praise all over "Gladiator" seems to have noticed that big chunks of it were lifted intact from "The Fall of the Roman Empire" (1964). Without credit, of course. It was directed by Anthony Mann, incidentally. The final duel in "Gladiator" is almost a Xerox of the same sequence in "Empire." I guess modern Hollywood would call it an homage. I just think it's laziness, if not theft. I wouldn't call "Empire" a classic, but it's light years ahead of "Gladiator."

I just saw "Unbreakable." I thought it was a noble failure, which didn't pack the wallop of "The Sixth Sense." Good cast, though, and still better than most of what Hollywood cranks out these days.

Charles

Dear Charles:

Anthony Mann's "Fall of the Roman Empire" is clearly a big influence on "Gladiator" and I probably should have mentioned it. They both take place in the same time period, too, under the Emperor Marcus Aurlieus, played by Alec Guinness in "Fall." Certainly "Fall" is a much better movie than "Gladiator," although I don't think it's a great film, and improbably has Sophia Loren as Guinness's daughter. I lifted the chariot race from that film for the Xena episode I wrote, "Chariots of War."

Josh

Name: Marc Gryscha
E-mail: gryscha@rumms.uni-mannheim.de

Dear Josh,

I'm in the University Film Club of the University of Mannheim/Germany. We're interested in screening RUNNING TIME on 16mm. So, how can that be done?

Best Regards
Marc

Dear Marc:

I have one decent 16mm print of "RT" left and it's a big hassle to send it overseas. I recommend buying the DVD and watching that, which, quite frankly, both looks and sounds better than the 16mm print. This method would also be far cheaper.

Josh

Name: Jess
E-mail: monkeycoda@stupid.com

Dear Josh:

Right in school i am learning how to direct. My drama teacher said we have to do something called a rythm project so we can learn how to direct. What we have to do is take anything we want a dialog, a poem, or something without words and direct. The problem is, is that it has to get to her some how so that she will go woa. I was wondering if you could give me any advise on what i should do, or how i can go about doing something like this. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Dear Jess:

Stupid.com? This is some kind of joke, right? No actual human can spell that poorly.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard
E-mail: bseckard@hotmail.com

Josh,

Do you think the three act structures apply to documentaries?

Also, I can't see the structure in most movies I watch. I try like hell and it dosen't show. Is there a typical structure in "The Last Picture Show" and "A Woman Under the Influence"? If there is, and I have the feeling you will say there is, I can not see it in either film. It seems to me nothing is resolved in either films. I also should add that both are among the greatest of films I've seen. Maybe I'm trying too hard to see a structure...

Another thing, you kinda remind me of film critic\teacher Ray Carney. Both of you two go on and on about the pitiful state of hollywood filmmaking. Carney however, feels the opposite when it comes to your ideas on structure. He says if you change your mind about a character or even the entire storyline while your shooting it's good...You've learned something you didn't know when you wrote the screenplay. If you don't learn while making the film how will the audience members learn anything from watching the picture? How do you feel about this, and Carney in general?

Happy New Year!

The very best.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

The three-act structure can apply to documentaries if they're edited well. The structure is applied afterward to a documentary, while editing. It's been a few years anyway since I've seen the films you've chosen as examples, nevertheless . . . In "The Last Picture Show," which is about the death of a town, exemplified in the lives of Sonny and Duane, I'd say act one ends when Sam the Lion forbids them entrance to the diner, and act two ends when Sam dies. And it seems to me, having not seen "A Woman Under the Influence" in 7 or 8 years, that the first moment of no return was Gena Rowlands freaking out at the breakfast with construction workers, and the second one was Peter Falk smacking her while she's standing on the hassock.

Regarding Ray Carney, whom I've never heard of, I say that shooting is too expensive and too technical to be a discovery process. Writing is a discovery process, and rehearsal is too, if you're lucky enough to get some. Sadly, though, on TV you don't get any rehearsal time. I've made time for it on my movies and it's invaluable. But if you don't know specifically what you're shooting by the time you're on the set, you're boned.

Josh

Name: Dusty H.
E-mail: L5g@excite.com

Dear Josh:

What is your thoughts on the body of work of Woody Allen? I just watched "Small Time Crooks" and almost fell asleep.

Dear Dusty:

When I was a kid I loved Woody Allen's movies and saw "Play it Again, Sam" 16 times at the theater, laughing like an idiot every time. However, once he won his Oscars for "Annie Hall" in 1977, I think his career went into the toilet. I've wondered many times why this was, and it hit me the other night as I was watching "Love & Death" for about the 20th time -- all of his movies from "Love & Death" back, his character is sort of a disgusting, funny little creep -- from "Annie Hall" forward, he's a lady's man that is always ending up in bed with the prettiest actresses, which may very well be true, but I don't want to see it. Also, I don't think he puts in much time on his scripts anymore, he's so eager to stay in production all the time, it looks it to me.

Josh

Name: Aaron
E-mail: agramham83@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

In your last answer you mentioned how your new film "If I Had A Hammer" is influenced by "The Magnificent Ambersons". Just wondering how so? Certainly not in subject matter. It's funny, I was just thinking of a Howard Hawks quote where he was referring to Peter Bogdanovich's "What's Up Doc". And how he said that the mistake he made in that picture was telling people that it was influenced by "Bringing Up Baby". So if you don't feel like you should reveal the influence of "Ambersons", that's cool too.

Dear Aaron:

Funny, Shirley, the webmaster here, asked the same question today. Both stories are about the end of one era and the beginning of another. In "Ambersons" it's the beginning of the modern, mechanized age, symbolized by the automobile. In "Hammer" it's the end of the folk era and the beginning of the rock age, symbolized in the character's sense of caring and commitment. That's the extent of the connection. And I really don't mind discussing my influences.

Josh

Name: David
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

That's what passes as creativity now, stealing from weird or old sources.

Just a comment about this quote you just made. You sound like it's not creative to get your stuff from something else.

If that's true, how do you feel about your work on your Xena episodes, like "Locked Up and Tied Down" which I heard you helped write. Seems like a rewrite of many of those old B-women prison movies. Or one where the basic story was gotten from Cinderella. Or the wrestling scene which was your idea which is nothing than attempt to copy the WWF. Or what about Ted Raimi who you seem to praise, which basically seems to just copy the 3-stooges.

I see all the comparisons in these things. Do you consider this work 'creative' since it all basically comes from other sources.

Just notice you seem to put down many things in television or film when they are got from someone else and complain about lack of creativity, but I notice the same things in work you have done yourself.

David

Dear David:

Goodness, I feel so chastised. First of all, you've never heard me make any reference to creativity regarding TV--it's not a particularly creative form, it's more like a giant garbage disposal. TV is the place where almost everything is based on a stolen idea, it's part of the process when each show has to crank out 22-24 episodes a year. Nevertheless, there is most definitely a difference between stealing an idea and being inspired by something. "Locked Up & Tied Down" may well be inspired by prison films, most specifically "Papillion," (which, by the way, is not a women's prison film), but we didn't steal the plot or any specific scenes. My new film, "If I Had a Hammer" (which ought to be completely finished now), was inspired by "The Magnificent Ambersons," although neither you nor anyone else would ever know it unless I told you. Also, putting a comic wrestling scene into something is also not stealing in my opinion--it's a parody, which is something else yet again. However, if you take the entire plot, as well as exact dialog from something else, you are a thief, a plagiarist. That's how I see it.

Josh

Name: John
E-mail: jforde40@hotmail.com

Howdy Josh,

Re: Quentin Tarantino's Great Swindle

An Open Letter to those who write Mr. Becker concerning Tarantino's "greatness."

I have just seen a documentary by Impossible Funky Productions called "Who Do You Think You're Fooling?" Basically, QT STOLE (not borrowed, was not influenced by) every scene of Reservoir Dogs" from a 1987 Ringo Lam film called "City On Fire."

Bottom line: TARANTINO STOLE WORD FOR WORD SCENE FOR SCENE FROM "CITY OF FIRE" TO MAKE "RESERVOIR DOGS!!!"

My jaw nearly hit the floor as this documentary dissected scenes from "City of Fire" and showed the EXACT same scene from "Reservoir Dogs." You've got to see it: WORD FOR WORD, SCENE FOR SCENE!! This is plagiarism at it's purest. I can't believe he got away w/ this. It's highway robbery.

Let me break this down further: Harvey Keitel's characters in "Dogs" equals Danny Lee's character in "City" and Tim Roth's character equals Chow Yun-Fat. WORD FOR WORD SCENE BY SCENE!! Ripped off, stolen, plagiarized, I'm shocked QT hasn't been thrown in jail. You QT supporters have got to see this.

The exact same camera angles, the exact same dialogue, everything. Miramax paid some tall cash to keep this documentary hidden, but you can't hide the truth. See this documentary and you'll know why I'm so shocked.

It also goes into Pulp Fiction. That was also stolen: Samuel Jackson's dialogue about "great vengeance and furious wrath " was lifted from 1979 The Bodyguard , Uma Thurman's syringe scene was STOLEN from American Boy. The list goes on and on...

Dear John:

Well, I haven't seen this documentary or any of the films you referenced, but I'd be interested to see them. I'm not terribly surprised by the information, either. That's what passes as creativity now, stealing from weird or old sources.

Josh

Name: Tamandra
E-mail: TAMandraM@aol.com

Josh,

Here's wishing you a terrific holiday, and happy New Year! What do you typically do to celebrate? I'm often by myself, so traditionally go to a movie on Christmas day...any recommendations?

I was also wondering, since you like Pink Floyd, if you listen to Roger Waters as well.

Take care.

Tamandra

Dear Tamandra:

Happy holidays to you, too. I don't usually do anything to celebrate holidays. I just sort of live through them. No, I've never been a fan of Roger Waters solo stuff, which all seems to be about him bitching about how difficult it is to be Rogers Waters.

Josh

Name: Josh
E-mail: ferricdog@yahoo.com

Dear Josh,

I enjoy and sincerely appreciate your work in film in this frigid digital era. I check your Q&A daily, and probably more than once daily because i am so eager to read your thoughts on thoughtful questions. But i am not here to kiss ass or ask questions for some stupid high school essay.

Unfortunately, i don't think i have one - a thoughtful "one", a thoughtful "question" - but rather, i have a few questions to ask you. So instead, i proceed with eager caution...

1. Have you seen the movie "Boondock Saints", and if so, what do you (and your staff) think of it?
2. Respectful of their individual styles, what do you think of the films of Jim Jarmusch and Hal Hartley?
3. Who are your favorite 5 musicians or bands?
4. Would you consider adding a page or link to your page to include your experience and expertise in cinematographic techniques, such as the wheel-chair-steady-cam, for amatuer filmmakers? I mean to ask for a strictly technical page.
5. Who are your 3 favorite actors and 3 favorite actresses of all time? And, in your opinion, what individual qualities make them so good to select him or her as the perfect candidate for the character they play?
6. As a yankee from Maine, stuck temporarily in Texass (and i do place the emphasis on "ass"), and considering your very accurate portrayal of "W" on your front page earlier this year, what do you think of this election shit (electorial collgege, supreme court, lady with Tammy Faye make-up and such), and what we are stuck with?
7. Finally, what do you think of a guy who quit smoking weed because his he didn't want his girlfriend to know he did?

Well, that's it. I hope all is well and we see "Hammer" soon.

sincerely,
joshua

Dear Joshua:

1. I have not seen or heard of this picture, and I have no staff.
2. I rather like Jim Jarmusch's film "Stranger Than Paradise," which I think is an excellent example of extreme low-budget filmmaking. I also think that film is his entire career and everything else is completely extraneous and dull. Hal Hartley is both dull and pretentious, which I find to be a completely unacceptable combination.
3. My 5 favorite musicians is too difficult of a question because I like too many and in too many genres. In rock I am very partial to: Bruce

Springsteen, Pink Floyd, Van Morrison, Natalie Merchant, all of Motown, The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, ELP, and many, many more. In jazz I really like: Dave Brubeck, Stan Getz, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Gerry Mulligan, Johnny Hodges, Duke Ellington, on and on. In classical I like: Aaron Copeland, Chopin, Ravel, Beethoven, etc.

4. As for adding a link about low-budget techniques, I'm not sure what that would be, although I'm perfectly happy to answer any questions as they come in.

5. I also have too many favorite actors to answer this succinctly. To me, an actor has to have concentration and intensity and be fully committed to the performance, wherever that takes them. I like James Cagney, Bette Davis, Myrna Loy, Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, Spencer Tracy, Kathrine Hepburn, Audrey Hepburn, Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Robert Mitchum, Henry Fonda, James Stewart, Jean Simmons, on and on and on

...

6. I think our election system is completely broken. We have no need for the electoral college anymore, which was instituted to give slave-owning states a bigger say in federal issues. By the Civil War the electoral college was outdated and useless, and here it is still screwing up our elections. I feel the the U.S. was given a choice between an A-student and a D-student and we ended up with the D-student, even though less people voted for him. I lived through Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, Sr., I can get through Geo. W., too.

7. I think he is a wimp.

Josh

Name: August
E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Not sure what if any holidays you celebrate this time of year, so hope you are enjoying a festive Solstice/Yule/Hannukah/Christmas/Kwanzaa.

I just saw the Golden Globe announcements today, and was struck with how unimaginative they seemed this year. Do you see any merit to either the Golden Globes or the Oscars at all these days, or has it become thoroughly political? (I was, however, impressed when your buddy Joe LoDuca finally won an Emmy last year!)

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

I spent most of my life as an Oscar geek and can easily reel off every Best

Picture from 1927-28 through 1980, when it all turns to mush. Now I don't care at all because so many crappy films have been given Oscars ("Out of Africa"? "Chariots of Fire"? "The English Patient"? Come on!). And I care even less -- which means, not at all -- about the Golden Globes.

Thanks for the holiday wishes and the same back on you.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Happy Holidays, Josh!

Comments, then questions, that's my posting for today. Saw "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." I really think it was outstanding; amazing stunts, sure, but there's a nice little police story underneath: a local cop who's trying to get out of the game and the operator of a private security firm (who's got a thing for the cop) investigate the theft of a rare sword, and think about the meaning of life and death. Cool. Also would give a "thumbs up" to "O Brother Where Art Thou," which was not only really funny but also created a mood that really evoked (for me, a person soon to be living in the Third Millennium) the Depression era in the rural, "deep" South.

Thanks also for your recommendation of "Lawrence of Arabia." It was awesome on the big screen!

So here's my question: most of the films this year really went beyond horrible. The primary problem I found with everything was in scripting: cliched stories and dialogue abounded, structure was incoherent, stories utterly lacked theme (what the hell were some of these filmmakers trying to tell the audience???). Oh, Josh, why won't more people abide by your essays on structure? OK, I digress, but with all these utterly witless films running around, all substituting "cutesy" for "genuinely clever," or "blatant" for "slowly revealed," it made me want to see films with subtlety, irony, mood.

What films do you recommend that are really "intelligent"? (And I'll just interrupt myself here to say that the first film that pops into my own little overworked head here is "Dr. Strangelove;" that's the kind of film I mean in my little tirade here on "subtle/ironic/intelligent.") Are there directors working today who you think are really good at delivering films that are clever or ironic (as opposed to "mashing me over the head with obviousness")?

Well, ho ho ho to all,
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

Ang Lee seems to know what he's doing, although I haven't seen the new one yet. What do you want me to say? We're in a malaise and I don't think

almost anyone is making intelligent, subtle, interesting films. That's just how it is at this time. One would think with the enormous increase in population that we ought to have three Hitchcocks and four Wylers and five Hawks, but alas, we have none. All we ourselves can do is do the best we can.

Josh

Name: Daniel Neumann
E-mail: neumann@hellseals.de

Hallo Josh!

Thank you very much for signing my photos! They just came right with the delivery of the TSNKE-DVD, which I really like, too. My girlfriend was very happy you signed a photo for her. I didn't tell her I asked you to so the surprise was even bigger. We had seen Running Time together and enjoyed it very much. Now you see - you have fans all around the world! Thanks also to Shirley!

Keep up the good work,

Daniel

Dear Daniel:

It was my pleasure.

Josh

Name: Benedict
E-mail: ben@berneusdavin.com

Dear Josh,

Why does the casting director get an "A.S.C." after their name? What does it mean?

Benedict

Dear Benedict:

It's the director of photography that frequently has the A.S.C. credit. That is the American Society of Cinematographers, the folks that print the Cinematographer's Manual, which is a very handy item.

Josh

Name: Charles
E-mail: cscorder@hotmail.com

Josh:

I've got an extensive TCM request list, too, but I'll save that until after Christmas. Meanwhile, what's your favorite silent movie? Offhand, I'd say "Potemkin," "Intolerance" (well parts of it, anyway) and the Douglas Fairbanks films "Mask of Zorro" and "Thief of Baghdad" top mine. One of the things I hate about TV today is that 20 or 30 years ago, PBS routinely showed foreign and silent films. Not anymore, and it's a shame.

Thanks and keep up the good work,
Charles

Dear Charles:

But TCM does show silent films pretty regularly, which is terrific. My favorite silent film is probably "The Docks of New York" directed by Joseph Von Sternberg. I also really like: King Vidor's "The Big Parade," Alfred Hitchcock's "The Lodger," Buster Keaton's "The General" and "Our Hospitality," Fred Niblo's "Ben Hur," Harold Lloyd's "The Freshman" and "Dr. Jack."

Josh

Name: kal fagan
E-mail: teapot_01@msn.com

Dear Josh:

would love to see the movie hell on frisco bay and black tuesday with edward g. robinson were can i get videos of them on see them on this classic channel can u get them to play them on ted tuners classics sincerely kal fagan

Dear Kal:

Sure, I'll put in a call to my bud, Ted Turner, and he'll play the films for you right away. Not a problem.

Josh

Name: Eric W.
E-mail: ericmann@cgocable.net

Dear Josh:

Do you dislike every film not written using the 3 act stucture? I am wondering this because from your little thing on screenplay structure you make it sound like every film not using that structure is a bad film. I bet you hate the film "Pulp Fiction" for that reason. Well Pulp Fiction is a great film for many reasons, one of which is that it breaks almost every screenwriting rule ever written and turned out better than most films that use those rules so religiously. I could list a few of the rules it breaks to it's own advantage but it would be a waste of time. I'm just saying that rules are meant to be broken more or less. Also I'm not saying that a screenplay that follows those rules can't be good a movie it MAY not be as good as a screenplay that bends those rules. What it all comes down to is creativity. I feel that screenwriting is like pottery: you start off with a clump of clay (The basic story) from there you can use any technque you to to form it in to the final product.

Dear Eric:

This is a dull argument I've answered 50 times since this site went up. You cannot move beyond a form until you have mastered the form. It is certainly possible to go beyond the three-act structure, but not until you've mastered it. Quentin Tarantino not only never mastered the three-act form, he doesn't understand it and can't work within it. "Pulp Fiction" did not take us somewhere new, it was simply deconstructing the form and replacing it with nothing. The last 30-minutes of that film is utterly extraneous. As Rob Tapert so aptly summarized it upon leaving the theater, "Well, that was real butt-burner." Forget structure for a moment and let's just deal with each of "Pulp Fiction's" half-assed attempts at telling stories--Bruce Willis is a boxer that threw the fight and now the mob is after him? This is some dusty old plot unearthed from a 1940s B-movie and not only is nothing new added, we get less than 1940s version because we don't even get to see the fight (I recommend seeing Robert Wise's "The Set-Up"); then there's the silly Uma Thurman snorting herion when she thinks it's coke--sorry, it just doesn't happen in the real world, they have totally different consistencies and tastes; John Travolta, the hitman, goes into a place with a big automatic weapon, doesn't see anyone, so he sets his weapon down and goes to take a leak? A hitman that stupid only exists in a bad movie. Travolta mistakenly shoots the kid's head off, then they have to call Harvey Keitel to come tell them to clean up the car and washes them down with a hose? Where do you suppose he picked up all that specialized knowledge? And the scene with terrible actor Quentin Tarantino screaming "nigger" over and over again to prove he's an edgy tough-guy, is an insult to everyone on the planet. I've got news for you, Eric, "Pulp Fiction" is a bad, over-long, shallow, ridiculous movie that did not take the form of movie writing anywhere new.

Josh

Name: Eric J. Williams
E-mail: ericmann@cgocable.net

Dear Josh:

First, have you ever seen a movie you liked? I ask this because I was just probing through your review page and from what I read (4 or 5 of your reviews) it didn't seem like you were really fond of movies in general.

Second, would you, as a director, recommend doing short pilot movies first to help raise funds or is it a waste of time?

Finally, *Running Time* was a great film, I wonder why it never became bigger than it was? I know that's not a question that you can really answer but hell.

Dear Eric:

I love good movies, there just hasn't been that many lately. Check out my [Favorite Film List](#), there really are hundreds of movies I love. Anyway, regarding pilot films, I did one for my film *TSNKE* and I think it was helpful in a number of ways. Sam, Bruce and Rob did a pilot for "Evil Dead" and it was very helpful, too. Joel and Ethan Coen did a pilot for "Blood Simple," as well.

Josh

Name: Adam
E-mail: abeales@serviceintelligence.com

Dear Josh:

I just read your comments on "Election". I think you're pretty much right about the way the movie flirts with and then abandons the ethics/morals issue, but I was more interested in "Election" as an examination of gender relationships, especially in light of the recent spate of "white guy midlife crisis" movies. I thought "Election" offered an interesting, feminist spin on roughly the same character dynamic that played out in "American Beauty" and "Fight Club". Early in the film, we're encouraged to side with Broderick's teacher against Witherspoon's student. The movie plays on easy stereotyping of Witherspoon's character to establish a cheap animosity towards her, and allows Broderick's very unreliable narrator to woo our (the audience's) favor. In the second act, however, Broderick's seemingly likable everyman self-destructs, revealing a bitter, jealous misogyny, while Witherspoon is humanized to the extent that we almost begin to identify with her. At that point, we begin to question the internal assumptions that allowed us to go along with the first act's easy stereotyping. Which I found fun and cool, although I do agree that the third act/coda was kinda unnecessary. Any thoughts?

Dear Adam:

I do think it's a rather interesting, seriously flawed film. I don't agree about Broderick becoming a misogynist in that the woman he sleeps with turns him in for no good reason, which seemed severely creepy and not his doing. She did sleep with him, she is seemingly friends with him, why would she intentionally rat on him and ruin his marriage? I don't think that makes him a misogynist. I also disagree about the "third act/coda was kinda unnecessary," it flatly doesn't work or fit with what came before and undermines everything that went before.

Josh

Name: Cheryl
E-mail: Cheryl12712@go.com

Dear Josh:

I was checkin out the latest on Bruce Campbell's website when I notice you had been added to links.

Thanks for the structure articles, brotha man.

How dare those screenwriting books tell us to put our scenes on index cards so we can move a scene around.

Are any of your screenplays published? You know, like all the Coen brothers screenplays. I'd love ta purchase "Lunatics: A Love Story" or "Running Time".

Dear Cheryl:

Of course, those screenwriting books are written by people who have never sold a screenplay, let alone had one made into a film. No, none of my scripts have been published. They only do that with bigshots like the Coens or Tarantino. [The script for RT](#) is available on this website, however. I'd happily post "Lunatics," too, but it's not in my hard-drive and my OCR program sucks.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard
E-mail: bseckard@cs.com

Josh,

Just a curious question. I've noticed that none of the "Evil Dead" movies, or any Sam Raimi's stuff for that matter, are on you "favorite films" list. It it

because you don't like his work, or are you just trying to keep from being biased?

At any rate, having worked on the original "Evil Dead" film, do you remember your initial reaction to the final cut?

Thanks for answering so many silly questions.

Sincerely,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

Honesty isn't always the best policy, certainly not in the film business, let's just leave it at that.

Josh

Name: Adam
E-mail: abeales@serviceintelligence.com

Dear Josh:

Maybe I just haven't found it yet, but there doesn't seem to be any real info on "If I Had a Hammer". What is it about? Why did you wanna make it? Etc.

Dear Adam:

It's about the end of the folk movement and the beginning of the rock era, which I say started at 8:00 P.M. Sunday, Feb. 9, 1964, when The Beatles were on Ed Sullivan. It about the end of an era and the beginning of another, which I find intriguing.

Josh

Name: Jim
E-mail: Starion106@aol.com

Josh,

I just finished reading your [article on the lifespan of creativity](#). Really interesting stuff. I love older Paul Simon music, like Graceland, and just listened to Negotiations and Lovesongs the other day. But you're right, his new stuff sucks. I saw him on SNL a couple weeks ago and was very

disappointed. He also tried doing a Broadway show a few years ago that completely bombed. So I guess he's done. But you made a comment about how good older screenwriters in town find it impossible to get work. Why is this exactly?

I saw recently that some older writers have filed a lawsuit that tv networks refuse to hire them because of their age. What's the deal with that? I mean, I'm hoping to get a career going in the industry, and to be perfectly honest, it almost seems easier for me to start a successful career than for these older, smarter colleagues to continue one. The studios and tv networks don't want reliable talent, they want fresh faces (the better to suck up). Or at least that's what it seems like to me.

I'm actually kind of worried that I'll get a decent career going, then ten years down the line no one will want to hire me, at a time when perhaps I'll be able to do my best work. A strange, strange business.

Also, you forget to mention Kubrick, who was perhaps washed up in the early 70's after Clockwork. Middling art since then, with EWS a bit of a disappointment. And speaking of art, I think that the more commercial-minded directors tend to have longer careers. Guys like Spielberg, Carpenter, Ridley and Tony Scott, etc. seem to be able to make thoroughly average work for long periods of time, while I dunno, guys like Terrence Malick make a few well received films, then disappear. There are exceptions of course, like Wyler and Hitchcock who managed to blur the line, but I think that in general, its the commercial directors that tend to have the longest 'creative' lifespans these days.

Jim

Dear Jim:

Just because a director somehow manages to keep working doesn't mean that they have or ever had any creativity. You used John Carpenter as an example longevity--when was the last time he made a good film? Quite frankly, I don't know that he ever did, but certainly not in 10 or 15 years. As far as I'm concerned, Terrance Malick shot his wad after "Badlands." I didn't bring Kubrick back up because I just recently let him have it in my Eyes Wide Shut review, but he had 15 incredible year--from 1955 to 1970--and everything after that was worthless. Ridley Scott may well keep working, but his creative period has been over for nearly 20 years, and Tony never had one. This all based on these guys having made hit films early on. But to just keep working, which is certainly a trick, isn't the same thing as being creative. As far as TV writers go, they're supposed to be the same age as they're trying to appeal to, as though an 18-year old knows better what an 18-year old wants. "60 Minutes" did a story on this last year and they interviewed the writers for "Law & Order," who are all in their 40s, 50s and 60s, and one of them said, In Hollywood when they make a movie called "Antz," they'd really like to get an ant to write it.

Josh

Name: Scott B
E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Do you have a recommendation for an economical yet quality light kit?

Thanks,

Scott

Dear Scott:

My recommendation regarding film equipment of all kinds is: rent or borrow everything, don't buy anything. There is simply no point in owning any of this stuff, it's touchy, it becomes outdated quickly and it needs constant repair. Just the bulbs for most movie lights are \$75 to \$300 each.

Josh

Name: Benedict
E-mail: ben@berneusdavin.com

Dear Josh,

Do you look back at your first two films and have much different opinions of them now? I imagine your strict screenwriting was always the same, but is there anything that you look back on and it's obvious that it was done by a "younger, less experienced Josh"?

Thanks.

Benedict

Dear Benedict:

Come on, I made TSNKE 16 years ago for 12 cents, that the film ever got finished is something of a miracle. When I hired Robert Rickman to be in the film he was the local Detroit Mr. T imitator. I said to him, "Now, I expect 100% out of you." At the wrap party Rickman came up to me and said, "You never asked for 100%." It's true, too. I do think the film has a couple of good sequences, however: when the Manson family breaks into the house, when Rickman wrestles with the fat biker with the garden shears, when Stryker and Miller first discuss the attack plan in the bunker. Regarding "Lunatics," I like a lot more of that film, but act one is 10 minutes too long and sort of lumpy, and act three is too vignetty. I'm still pretty pleased with "RT" and "Hammer."

Josh

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